

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2005

WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

400 PHENIX AVENUE

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 5:00 P.M.

PUBLIC SESSION: 7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

The regular monthly meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at Western Hills Middle School with the following members present: Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Palumbo, Mr. Stycos, and Mr. Traficante. Also present were Mrs. Ciarlo, Mr. Scherza, Mr. Balducci, Mr. Votto, Mr. Laliberte, and Attorney Gregory Piccirilli.

The meeting was called to order at 5:20 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel pursuant to RI State Laws 42-46-5(1) and 42-46-5(2) contract and litigation.

The meeting reconvened at 7:20 p.m.

The role was called and the Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

It was moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mr. Palumbo and unanimously carried that the February 14, 2005 Executive Session minutes remain confidential.

I. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Lupino reported that on Saturday, March 12th, at the Alpine Country Club, Pippin Orchard Road, the Cranston Education Foundation will hold their Fourth Annual Hearts of the Vine Wine Tasting. He has had the good fortune to attend this event in the past. It is a wonderful time that Mr. George David and his committee puts on. There is also a Silent Auction as a part of the fund raising. The prevue begins at 6:30 p.m. The tasting begins at 7:00 p.m. They have wonderful food and hors d'ouvres. The fund raising actually goes to the Cranston Education Foundation which has done quite a bit to support the students in Cranston. The flyers are posted throughout the city. Mr. Bob Gasbarro of Gasbarro Liquors has been very supportive of this, and he sponsors it. The tickets are \$55.00 per person and \$60.00 if purchased at the door. A table of ten can be purchased for \$500. Anyone can contact Gasbarro Liquors, or the Cranston Education Foundation is listed in the white pages of the telephone book.

II. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Stycos reported that Mr. Scherza, Mr. Zisseron and him had a meeting with RIPTA to talk about possibly having them have some of the Cranston students ride the RIPTA buses to school rather than on Cranston buses. The meeting consisted of questions and answers and brainstorming. RIPTA will come back to the school department with some specific proposals as to where they feel the district could tap into their existing bus routes. They are not interested in doing any kind of bus route that is specifically for Cranston students, but if they can use the bus route that is already there to get children places they need to go, that will be their proposal. They also discussed this for not only children in Cranston schools but also children who attend outside schools. RIPTA cannot take children who are under 12 so it is for high school students. Their proposal would be a mix of students from Cranston East or Cranston West who could use a RIPTA bus but not everyone who goes to East or West. The next tentative meeting is scheduled for March 4th at 3:30 p.m. in the Briggs Building, and anyone is welcome to attend. At the meeting, Mr. Zisseron said that the real savings would come when a bus can be taken off the road not just when a high school run is eliminated. The RIPTA representative suggested that if a middle school was shifted to an earlier starting time that might be easier to do.

Mr. Lupino reported that the regularly scheduled February School Buildings Committee meeting which was rescheduled to March 1st has been again rescheduled to March 8th at 7:00 p.m. At that time, they will discuss the Cranston East addition project.

Mr. Traficante stated that Resolution No. 05-1-3 which was adopted at the January School Committee meeting authorized the Chairman to set up rules, regulations, and policy for the committee. Unfortunately, that draft was due for the March work session, and this sub-committee will need a one-month's extension because a few of the members on this committee had personal obligations. They would like to report back to the committee in April rather than March. Mr. Palumbo said that he saw no problem doing this.

III. SPEAKERS – AGENDA ITEMS

Donna Vasconcellos, 766 Laten Knight Road – She spoke on the proposed budget for 2005-2006. She referred to the money that was restored in the technology account for technology set aside. She told the committee that Western Hills was the only secondary school that was not network wired, and this summer the parent group provided the funding so that school could be networked with a wireless system. The system is cheaper to install, but it requires newer computers. They are now finding out that many of the computers at

Western Hills can't hook up to the wireless network because they are too old. She asked the School Committee to fully fund this account so

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that Western Hills can update as many computers as possible. She wasn't sure of how much was in this account, but the school needs all the help it can get. In addition, the Mathematics Department asked the parent group to purchase computers and printers for the new secondary math program they are installing. She understands that Bain and Park View can pay for these computers with their Title 1 money, but since Western Hills doesn't have Title 1 money, they are a little short in buying these computers. They need twelve computers with twelve printers which cost approximately \$12,000. The parent group is willing to try to find the money to do this, but she asked the School Committee to do their fair share to try to fund as much money on the technology side. The parent group is willing to help, but they can't do it all themselves.

Mrs. Ciarlo responded that this has happened in the past, and administration has always tried to accommodate Hope Highlands School because they do not receive any Title 1 funding. She noted that Park View does not receive Title 1 funding. They would not start something at Bain and Park View and not make some type of accommodations for Western Hills. These things will be done if they

receive the money in the proposed budget. Mrs. Ciarlo suggested to Mrs. Vasconcellos that they could meet at some point to discuss Western Hills and the areas where they don't receive funding.

Mrs. Vasconcellos referred to the assessment scores and noted that there was a considerable drop in the scores between grades 4 to 8. In the language arts scores, the district achieved 79% as a school district in Grade 4 but only 60% in Grade 8. She asked the reason why there was such a drop in the scores in middle school. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that the hormones do kick in during middle school, but administration is looking to increase the amount of time on task. There is much more experience to study English/language arts than to study mathematics. They are looking for additional time for the core courses and also looking for after-school programs. In the budget, administration has proposed math coaches because they feel this is an area not everyone has specialized in, and the district absolutely needs to be as accountable in mathematics as in English. There is no excuse, and she will continue this push. Part of the gap comes from the fact that there is a smaller pool in the elementary schools, and there is a larger pool in the middle school. In addition, it is a very difficult test. Rhode Island and Vermont chose the higher standards rather than meeting the average standard. She knows that there is a drop off in high school, and this is the first time that she has seen changes in movement in high school scores in thirty-seven years. The district has to get more students meeting the standard, and those who are meeting the standard moving on to exceed the

standard. Administration is aware of it, and hopefully some programs can be initiated in the fall to help close that gap.

Mrs. Vasconcellos stated that she could understand why literacy and math are important because she has an engineering degree. She also knows that many teachers say that for a lot of students can't do well in word problems because they can't read critically. She wants to make sure that as a district it doesn't lose sight of the literacy

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goals; literacy still needs to be improved at the middle school level because they can't improved the math scores if the literacy scores overall are not improved. Mrs. Ciarlo remarked that she is planning on additional staff in Literacy. There is 1.5 additional Literacy teachers in the budget because they are picking up an additional grade. They had Grades 6 and 9 and will now do Grades 7 and 10, and they need the staff in order to do this. As long as she is around this district, no one will forget Literacy. They have looked at problem solving first as a reading skill. If the students can read and interpret, then they can talk about how they are going to solve problems.

Mrs. Vasconcellos said that Mr. Nero has an extended day program after school where the academically at risk students are targeted. This year Mr. Nero did not receive as much funding as he had in the past. The parent group provided \$4,000 this year to fully fund this

program. Mr. Nero feels this program is important, and that is why Western Hills is a high performing school. If his program could be fully funded, it would give the parent group \$4,000 more to buy computers for the Math Department. If the parents are funding one program, it can't fund another program. She would like to see Mr. Nero's budget fully funded this year so that the parent group doesn't have to put the money elsewhere. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that it wasn't seen in Fund 1 because it was in Fund 5. Mr. Nero has come to her, and he had very little money to work with. He kept adding other activities as well, and that is what a good principal does. He was funding reading and math and the arts as well. Mrs. Ciarlo stated that she would like to have a meeting for those schools who are not funded through Title 1 to see if there can be a compromise. Bain receives funding through the 21st Century Grant, and Park View receives some funding.

Mrs. Vasconcellos referred to the salaries for administration. She knows that the central administrators work very hard, and they are very deserving of large pay increases. She is concerned about the committee's ability to bargain. Her husband is a CEO of a company. When bargaining units are asked to accept only a certain salary increase, it is very difficult to give people at the top something much larger than that because those other people are being asked to work very hard at their jobs too. The district has good assessments and good scores because teachers work very hard, and there are principals who work very hard. It puts the committee in a difficult

situation when the people at the top are not asked to comply with the same guidelines as the people who are at the bottom. It is not good for the organization, and she asked the committee to be cognizant of this. She stated that she was not saying that the administrators don't deserve it but rather it may not be politically correct to do this. She hears people making comments in the schools who are at the bottom of the ranks, and they do feel a certain amount of resentment when they have pay increases, and the conception was that those at the top were getting large increases. Her husband in his position feels that if everyone else is being asked to tighten their belt, the same holds true for him. It presents problems at her house, but they practice what they preach. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that the central office people's raises are the same percent as those of the

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teachers and everyone else. It was a 3% raise. Just as teachers have opportunities to grow, administrators are not brought in at top step. Most times, they have some experience and begin on third step. When there was a co-pay in Cranston, she was the first one to take a co-pay as Superintendent. She has never asked the troops to do something that she wouldn't do herself. By saving on salaries, the district has people who are doing multiple jobs. Mr. Balducci, in another district, would be solely the business administrator. He is in charge of all non-certified staff so he has a double edge responsibility. Ms. Bryan is the principal of Stadium School in

addition to being the Director of Library Services. Mr. Votto is the Director of Personnel, and in another community this position would interview and set up procedures. In another community, this person would not deal with negotiations, grievances and arbitration. With a very small central office staff, she has tried to make their salaries comparable to the responsibilities they have and save money along the way. Joel Zisseron performs two job responsibilities as well as the Director of Plant and Director of Transportation. Mr. Scherza is the Assistant Superintendent, and with a school district this size with over 11,000 students, there should be two assistant superintendents. Pawtucket, who is poverty-stricken, has two assistant superintendents plus a full-time director of curriculum. There are six people, Mrs. Ciarlo included, who run a school system for over 11,000 students. If that perception is out there, she will do all in her power to turn around and say that it is false. They have never taken a higher percent raise than anyone else. To work as hard as the administrators do in Cranston and deliver the results they do, there must be some compromise. She has been in this district for forty-five years, and for each of those forty-five years, she has been told to tighten her belt because it was going to be a difficult year. There has never been affluence in Cranston. Cranston doesn't know what it means to be affluent. The Cranston administrators are some of the lowest paid in the state. The Superintendent is one of the lowest paid in the state. It has taken her eight years to even come close to where the Superintendent of Warwick is, and he has been there for many years. Cranston is lower than communities with far less students

such as East Greenwich and Johnston. If people expect administrators to have double duty and produce, which they are, and expect them to stay, they have to be compensated fairly. She would never expect someone else to do something that she would not do herself. She will do all in her power to explain it to someone who would like to meet with her. Cranston has one of the leanest central office staffs in the state. Since Carol Bissanti retired, no one replaced her. Mr. Votto is responsible for almost 1,900 personnel. He has to keep all the records for all of them along with all their issues. Mrs. Ciarlo told Mrs. Vasconcellos that she was glad she brought it to her attention.

Mrs. Vasconcellos added that when people are given new job responsibilities they should be given new job titles which should be reflected in the budget. The job responsibility would not be reflected in the budget. All people are seeing is that top administrators are making more money.

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Mr. Lupino indicated that a former School Committee worked with Mrs. Ciarlo to develop a series of steps for central administrators which allowed her the discretion of not awarding steps if it was not based on merit. In some of the line items, there is a percent increase plus a step. Mrs. Ciarlo has denied step increases in the past.

Michael Cardarelli, Jr., 53 Fairfield Road – He addressed Mrs. Vasconcellos's comments. When one looks at the budget as a sterile document, the first thing the public gets caught up on is the administrators' salaries because there is only a handful of them, and it is very easy to pick out Mr. Balducci's salary or Mrs. Ciarlo's salary.

One can see their previous salary and the increase. They do not see the individual teacher salaries because they are lumped together at one school. They don't see the teachers' step or raise and the teachers' proposed new salary, but it is exactly the same. Unless the teacher is at top step, the teacher gets a step plus a raise and a new proposed salary. As Mr. Lupino mentioned previously, the previous School Committee brought the administrators on with steps just as the teachers have steps, and what one sees in the contract is a percentage increase and a step. The only exception is that all the steps are not broken down individually because of the length of the document. Anyone can chastise this document, but it is a very open document which is on line and in the local libraries.

Mr. Cardarelli referred to Resolution No. 05-2-9, the retirement of Mrs. Maureen Cicchitelli. In his tenure on the School Committee, he found Mrs. Cicchitelli one of the most professional principals he ever had to deal with. When she was principal at Dutemple School, which was his district, he knew her as a principal of one of the schools in his district and the school where his niece and nephew attended school. He knew her as the principal of the school where his friends worked,

and everyone spoke of her in the highest regard. She was a member of the community and was highly regarded by the parents and children at her schools. Whenever he dealt with a concern from a parent, she went out of her way to answer his questions and try to resolve them. She will truly be missed by this school system. Everyone wishes her well, but it brings up a point the Superintendent made in this proposed budget regarding aspiring principals. It is extremely difficult to replace the caliber of principals that the system is losing to retirement, and this is a major point. When the district loses someone like Mrs. Cicchitelli, it will be difficult to get this type of quality being lost to retirement. Mr. Cardarelli wished Mrs. Cicchitelli well. She is desperate to visit her grandson who was just born. The aspiring principals' proposal is another progressive corrective thought on the part of Mrs. Ciarlo because the applicants aren't out there.

Mr. Cardarelli also spoke on Resolution No. 05-2-21. He stated that he was in full support of the Superintendent's proposed budget. He asked the committee to fully support the Superintendent's proposal. As he had stated at a previous meeting, there is a whole range of items in her budget, but more specifically the math coaches in the amount of approximately \$273,000 are needed. With regard to the math scores for

Grade 11, there is only one year left when the students either go on to college or go on to the job market. He doesn't know how much more can be done with a child in Grade 12, but at Cranston West the percentage who met or exceed the standard with 98.9% of the students taking the exam is 48%. That is great except for the 51% who did not meet the standard. He felt that this was a record that was unacceptable. At Cranston East, with 98.1% taking the exam, 38.7% met or exceeded the standard, and 68% of the students didn't meet their goals. Again, Mrs. Ciarlo in her wisdom is looking pro-actively at this situation trying to get these students beforehand. She has placed math coaches in her budget, and this is something the committee has not seen before. With regard to new personnel, she is not looking for anything that is unreasonable. To the committee's credit, none of them have used any type of inflammatory language during this budget process. This budget is asking for one elementary teacher, a .5 Epic teacher, a .4 nurse, etc. There wasn't much discussion at the last meeting. He asked the committee to go forth with this budget and vote for what this district truly needs. Do it in a dignified manner and present it to the Mayor. If he chooses or his administration chooses to attack the committee, then shame on them. They need to be told what this city needs. No one has come before the committee asking that this budget be cut or to do what the taxpayers want. The City Council will then have to worry about this budget.

Mark Colozzi, 490 Comstock Parkway – Mr. Colozzi is Supervisor of

Music for Cranston Public Schools. He urged the committee's support regarding music education in the schools. They have sustained a zero budget in the line items this year, and sometimes the budget doesn't appear that way because out of the fairness to the principals they have taken certain dollar amounts out of their budgets to support music education. They are particularly hurting in the areas of instrument repair and music purchase. As Director of the Cranston East band, he spent over \$1,000 this year out of the booster funds for repairs and music purchase. He fears that if he goes another year in this realm the district will fall behind. Cranston West has not had a music purchase budget for three years. On behalf of his staff, they have been super about music booster money and fund raising monies. They are now calling duct tape band tape because it holds instruments together. He hopes to be able to get the instruments repaired to avoid the eventual expense of new instruments. With regard to the string program, he urged the committee to protect the investment they have been so wise to make these past several years. There are nearly 800 children in the City of Cranston who are studying string instruments; that is a high percentage of the student body. It would be a shame to see this cut after this wise investment. Within two years, they will boast the largest string program in the State of Rhode Island. Orchestras throughout the State are making a comeback after so many years as a dead animal. The students at the elementary level thoroughly enjoy participation in strings. A parent called him the other about one of his music teachers, Ann Russillo, who broke her leg. This parent is so appreciative of what has been

done with the string program; he has three children, all of whom are taking strings. Mr. Colozzi thanked the School Committee for all their support of music education, especially the strings program over the past few years.

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Mr. Stycos referred to page 109 of the proposed budget, and he believed this page listed the accounts Mr. Colozzi referred to. This current year there was no money for music repair, but next year \$4,000 is being proposed. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Colozzi if this was enough or if he could use more. Mr. Colozzi responded that he could use more because the department has fallen behind in their repairs. Because of some of the secretarial work in the Business Office, he was able to save \$800 in the area of purchase for equipment. He shifted that money to repairs, and this was split between the two high schools to play catch-up. He could use a little more in that area, but with \$2,000 in both schools, it will set a good pace for them. The dollar amount for sheet music is a considerable increase over previous years because Cranston West has not had a sheet music budget for two years. They have shared music and have gotten by, but he would like to see 60% or 70% of that amount go to Cranston West. In the area of music equipment purchase in the amount of \$7,000 would be for the high schools to purchase equipment. A sousaphone was just purchased for Cranston East at a cost of \$5,000 through Cranston East funds. Unless there are large dollar amounts

at any given time, they are difficult to purchase. Mrs. Ciarlo asked about the lease-purchase music program, and Mr. Balducci responded that next year will be year five of the agreement. Mr. Colozzi added that the district purchased \$20,000 worth of percussion equipment and some wind instruments. This really set them in the game particularly with both high schools. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Colozzi what he would like to do now, and Mr. Colozzi stated that with Mrs. Ciarlo's approval he wanted to advertise in the Providence Journal and the Cranston Herald for used instruments to be donated to Cranston Public Schools. He would like to build a coffer to help the Title 1 schools, particularly Bain, Arlington, Gladstone, and some of the other schools. There are instruments where people will come forth and donate. He has had at least five instruments donated to the Cranston East program. Some of these schools have lower numbers participating in music because of the socio-economic conditions. He would like to have a band supply program in those schools. Mr. Lupino suggested doing this through the band parents because they have a non-profit status. There are some incredible students graduating and going to wonderful music schools such as Oburland, Fresno State and some of the high-powered conservatories.

IV. MINUTES OF MEETINGS – January 3, 2005; January 10, 2005; January 19, 2005; February 2, 2005

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously

carried that the minutes of January 3, 2005; January 10, 2005; January 19, 2005; and February 2, 2005 be approved.

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V. RESOLUTIONS

SPONSORED BY MR. ARCHETTO

NO. 05-2-3 – RESOLVED, that all resolutions to the Cranston School Committee should have a sponsor's name attached to the resolution.

Moved by Mr. Lupino and seconded by Mr. Traficante that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Lupino commented that he was confused by this resolution because in the past, and he did not know if it was under policy, but when a resolution came forward with the names of one, two, or three members, the names were automatically put on the resolution. If there were more than three names, it would have been a violation of the open meetings law because the majority would have discussed putting the resolution on. **Mr. Archetto** explained that this resolution is for clarification purposes. The resolution is submitted and the sponsor's name appears with the resolution. If it comes from administration, that would be attached to the resolution. **Mrs. Ciarlo**

commented that if a resolution comes from administration, it would come from only the Superintendent. Mr. Palumbo stated that in the past all resolutions came from committee members or the Superintendent. If it makes it any clearer for the committee to have a name attached to it, he had no problem with it. It is something that has always been understood in the past. Mr. Lupino asked Mrs. Ciarlo if there was any time where a resolution would be introduced by anyone other than the committee or the Superintendent, and Mrs. Ciarlo said no. All of the resolutions falling under administration are at the recommendation of the Superintendent. If there was one committee member presenting a resolution, that committee member's name appeared with the resolution. If it were three or more, it would be sponsored by the committee.

Mrs. Greifer stated that this resolution should be amended because as it is stated it says that all resolutions to the School Committee should have a sponsor's name attached. As Mr. Lupino mentioned, if there are three or more, this can't be done. Mr. Archetto asked Mrs. Greifer what her amendment was, and Mrs. Greifer stated that she would not be voting to amend it. It would have to state that all resolutions sponsored by three or fewer members of the School Committee would have those names attached to it. She would not be able to support it as stated. Mr. Traficante remarked that there have been several congratulatory resolutions which have been sponsored by the entire School Committee. He could not see where this would have any bearing on that situation. There were times that City

Council members sponsored resolutions congratulating someone for a variety of reasons. Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Archetto that if the committee were to not vote for this resolution would he accept the committee's past practice. Mr. Archetto responded that he could withdraw this resolution, but he believed there could be more discussion on it. Mr. Stycos agreed with Mr. Traficante that there would be no problem with four or five people sponsoring a resolution, but he had a problem with four or five people getting together to discuss something at a non-open

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meeting. If a majority of the members at a work session said they would like to put a resolution on the agenda, that is in keeping with the open meetings law. He doesn't think the number of sponsors is an issue. If people start meeting privately in groups of four or more, that is a problem. Mr. Lupino added that if the majority of the committee has a consensus on something, then it is the committee. There is no one who would be excluded from saying he or she did not vote on that because he or she was not a member of the committee. It is a vote by the majority, so when the majority votes, it is the committee. It would be cumbersome to state that a resolution is being sponsored by Mr. Traficante, Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Mr. Palumbo and Ms. Iannazzi but not by Mr. Lupino. He couldn't see the reason for this resolution. Mr. Archetto reiterated his earlier statement that this resolution was basically for clarification.

This Resolution was adopted with Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, and Mr. Lupino opposed.

Mr. Palumbo turned the Chair over to Mr. Lupino.

SPONSORED BY MR. PALUMBO

NO. 05-2-4 – Whereas, the Cranston School Committee wishes to be as accountable as it can be in the expenditure of funds given the problems that the City has experienced in the last few years,

Be it RESOLVED that the Cranston School Committee consider hiring a part-time outside auditor who could assist the committee in not only monitoring all accounts but also in assisting with any additional areas for cost savings, and

Be it further RESOLVED that the committee put forth a Request for Proposal for a part-time auditor.

Moved by Mr. Lupino and seconded by Mr. Traficante that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Palumbo stated that the committee needs this part-time auditor because if the committee wants to examine every part of its budget thoroughly, they need another viewpoint. It is not that Mr. Balducci doesn't do a great job; he does. It is important when the committee

talks with the City Council and the Mayor that they can validate what he is saying. When the School Committee is challenged or when the Superintendent is challenged on an issue, usually there is only one voice who states this is the way something should be. Because of that, he felt the committee should hire a part-time independent auditor to work on areas of the budget that the committee wants to examine more closely in order to save in those particular areas or perhaps to justify what the committee has done was done right. Mr. Palumbo stated further that he wrote a letter to the Auditor General asking him what he thought of the idea, and his

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answer spelled out very clearly that he agreed with the idea wholeheartedly. With that in mind, he felt he had presented his case.

Mr. Stycos asked who this person would report to, and Mr. Palumbo responded that this person would report to the Superintendent, and the Superintendent would then report to the committee. Mr. Stycos asked how this person would come up with something that the committee already doesn't get through Mr. Balducci. Mr. Palumbo responded that this wasn't the point. In the past, the committee has determined what has been needed in the budget and given their rationale for it. It has been argued that it is not valid and for whatever

reasons by the administration and the Council in certain cases. If there is a particular area that the committee feels is sensitive such as medical and transportation, if there is an independent outside auditor who can examine it from a different view, the committee can then get the opinion from that particular person as to whether or not he or she feels what the committee is doing is adequate and is correct. If in some case that person feels something different should be done, that would be fine as well. The committee has always been conscious of saving money, and this person could verify that something has been done correctly or this person would help the committee save money so that the budget could be lower.

Mr. Stycos asked Mrs. Ciarlo if she had a position on this resolution, and Mrs. Ciarlo responded that if she were going to court, she would want Mr. Balducci to represent her because of his expertise as a business administrator as well as his experience as an auditor. One of the problems the school department faced last year when they went to court was that they went in with their troops which was the executive staff. The other side brought in outside experts. The reality was that the judge was listening to them because they had outside experts. She doesn't believe that Mr. Palumbo is looking for someone to look over Mr. Balducci's shoulder because if anyone can find more money to save than Mr. Balducci and Mr. Anderson, it wasn't possible. The school department is talking about accountability, and everyone knows what can happen with figures. The administrators have always been honest and stated that there

was no fat in the budget. She has never submitted a budget to simply pump it up, and yet everyone thinks that they have pumped it up from time to time. She sees this as a very part-time position basis because they are not talking about a large salary. Periodically this person could give his or her opinion to verify that they are on the right road. It is always nice to have someone take a look from the outside. One of the advantages for the school department this year was the fact that they did not receive a management letter from the outside auditor for the city. A management letter is usually issued by an outside auditing firm when they make recommendations for improvement to what is being done. Some of this is responding to the issues surrounding the health care issues. It would be advantageous to have someone from the outside review those figures to see if they were accurate. This in no way takes away from the outstanding job that both Mr. Balducci and Mr. Anderson do, but rather it is to respond to those critics who say that the school department administrators are the highest paid in the state which they are

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not. There are so many aspects to running this business from a management point of view, and she felt that this would be an added asset but in no way would it replace or detract from what Mr. Balducci does.

Mr. Traficante remarked that this is certainly not a new concept. It

has been applied to all levels of government. The City Council recently hired their own auditor last year as a checks and balance to hold the city auditor and the administration accountable. He disagreed with one of Mr. Palumbo's remarks. He doesn't believe that the auditor should report to the Superintendent; this auditor should report directly to the School Committee through the Chairman or the members at large. Again, this is not belittling or demeaning the competency of Mr. Balducci, but he has one set of eyes and it would certainly help to have two sets of eyes in getting the things from this budget or in getting accountability in areas of concern that the committee may have.

Mr. Stycos stated that he could not support this resolution as it was written. If the committee is looking for credibility to hire another person no matter what he or she has to say, it is going to be viewed as the school department saying it. Therefore, it won't be an outside view. Secondly, the school department doesn't have a lot of extra money. At the last meeting, members of this committee voted not to spend money for middle school sports, for textbooks, and the committee regularly has people come forward asking for things. A parent came forward from Hope Highlands asking for another teacher or at least another aide for Grade 2 at that school. The committee has to make some tough decisions, and he doesn't think that a part-time auditor is something that is particularly needed. More importantly, the committee could use that money for much better things such as textbooks and supportive things for the school system. This is not

going to convince people at City Hall that the numbers are legitimate. Currently, the school department's biggest problem is the credibility of the performance audit. The Mayor hired an outside auditor who did a report, and the committee doesn't feel that this report has credibility. This would be the same thing for this person. Mr. Lupino stated that Mr. Stycos was making incorrect statements. Mr. Stycos went on to say that he felt the committee ought to take that performance audit seriously, and a public review of that would earn the committee a lot more credibility than spending \$30,000 on a part-time auditor.

Ms. Iannazzi commended Mr. Palumbo for putting this resolution on the agenda. He has demonstrated over the past month that he does have the interest of the taxpayers and the students of Cranston, and he is putting them ahead of his own personal interests. Hiring a part-time auditor would serve many purposes. First there is the potential immediately for the part-time auditor to find enough savings to pay his or her own salary. Secondly, this resolution as written does not bind the committee to anything. It is simply requesting that a proposal be put forth and does not bind the committee to hire a person. Thirdly, the School Committee has not done well what the Mayor has been able to do well and that is that the Mayor is able to sell what he needs

to sell. Having a part-time auditor will show what the committee already knows which is that the school department is run as efficiently as humanly possible. Having that auditor there, whether he or she finds little savings or a lot of savings, will just add to the committee's ability to sell the work that is done by the administrators here.

Mr. Lupino said that after reading the audit that is done annually there were several mentions that they had to report only what they saw. They made a few very brief recommendations, but many times they said that it was not part of their duties. He asked if the RFP could be written to enhance that portion of what is not getting done by the audit in such a way that it would be an extra pair of eyes for Mr. Balducci. It would also look to those areas where changes should be made where they are not a recommending body. Mr. Balducci responded that the external auditors do not look at 100% of the transactions. They take a sampling of certain areas and make sure that the sample they looked is operating efficiently. He has staff on board that looks at 100% of the transactions. The external auditor can look at only a sample and feel comfortable with it. As far as an external independent auditor coming on board, he felt it was a great idea if that person wanted to validate the budget moving forward so everyone is comfortable with it. He doesn't have a problem with it. He felt that the person should report to the School Committee with another set of eyes. He appreciated the comments made regarding his office because he does have a competent staff on board, and they

look at every single area possible. If it is one more assistance for the School Committee, it would be great. Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Balducci if he saw it as more of an ongoing situation where someone would report periodically such as when a budget revision is done and if this person would take a role in the Budget Sub-committee to present an unbiased view and an extra set of eyes to that committee. In response, Mr. Balducci said that he goes through the budget process four or five times a year, and that person could receive a copy of the budget revision document, and go through it to answer any questions so that when it is presented to the School Committee for approval, the independent party would put the stamp of approval on it as well. Mr. Lupino reminded the other members of the committee that the Auditor General has said that he would do a performance audit of the school department at no charge, but the Mayor and the administration elected to spend \$129,000 of the school department's money. This is the same Auditor General who is saying that this is something that the school department should have. This is what will give the committee credibility; this is something that my department can't accomplish but feels it is necessary to be fiscally responsible. He stated further that he would support this resolution.

Mr. Palumbo stated that he wasn't going to quote any parts of the letter from the Auditor General, but the reason he wrote the letter was due to the fact that he wanted to go to a source who would be an honest person who had both the skills in accounting, and he felt he was the person he should go to. If it wasn't a good idea, the Auditor

General would have told him that. Mr. Palumbo quoted from his letter, “I believe this initiative would be a positive step providing evidence of your commitment to fiscal accountability.”

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Mr. Palumbo further commented that even though Mr. Stycos said that no one is going to listen to it, he doesn't believe that. Mr. Palumbo quoted further in the letter, “Establishing an internal audit function, by hiring an independent audit firm to serve in this role, could provide the School Committee with additional financial expertise to assist it in fulfilling its duties as effectively and efficiently as possible. The internal auditor could also help in monitoring the design and proper functioning of internal control policies and procedures and provide an additional level of control to help improve the overall control environment.” Mr. Palumbo stated that he agreed with the Auditor General 100%; this is why he thought it would be a good idea to put a part-time auditor on the payroll. He really felt that it would pay off and that the committee needs a person not just for what the Auditor General said but also for the reasons stated by members of this committee.

Mr. Traficante moved to amend this Resolution as follows:

After the word “and” it should state and that the external auditor will report to the members of the School Committee.

Mr. Archetto seconded the motion.

Mrs. Ciarlo stated that just as the auditor comes in from the city and does all their work and gives a report at the end, they only ask questions for verification. One of the problems with the other unnamed audit is the fact that it was not independent and other people were wordsmithing and invalidated the entire results. This could be a first for the school department because there are more political challenges to their budget than many other school systems have. This would put the school department in the vanguard of what they are doing to raise the bar to meet the standard with honors. It is already being done now, but this will add extra stars. Given all the requirements that keep changing in this field, it is becoming a very large area of responsibility. It would be important when doing the RFP to set the examples of what the responsibilities would be. She assumed that this would be in the budget for next year.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Traficante if he would consider his amendment to include the dollar amount or a dollar range for this position, and Mr. Traficante responded that he would have no problem doing that. Mr. Palumbo assumed the salary to be approximately \$30,000.

Mr. Traficante revised his amendment as follows:

In the first paragraph, after the words “expenditure of funds” add

\$28,000 to \$35,000

Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion.

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This two-part amendment was adopted unanimously.

This Resolution as amended was adopted with Mr. Stycos opposed.

This Resolution as amended twice reads as follows:

SPONSORED BY MR. PALUMBO

NO. 05-2-4 – Whereas, the Cranston School Committee wishes to be as accountable as it can be in the expenditure of funds in the amount of \$28,000 to \$35,000 given the problems that the City has experienced in the last few years,

Be it RESOLVED that the Cranston School Committee consider hiring a part-time outside auditor who could assist the committee in not only monitoring all accounts but also in assisting with any additional areas for cost savings, and that the external auditor will report to the members of the School Committee

Be it further RESOLVED that the committee put forth a Request for

Proposal for a part-time auditor.

Mr. Palumbo returned the Chair to Mr. Palumbo.

ADMINISTRATION

PERSONNEL

NO. 05-2-5 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following certified personnel be appointed for the remainder of the 2004-2005 school year:

Karli Croft, salary to be at the first step of the prevailing salary schedule

Education –Rhode Island College, B.S.

Experience – Cranston Public Schools' Substitute

Certification - Special Education, K-12

Assignment – Cranston High School West, Special Education, 1.0 FTE

Effective Date of Employment - February 14, 2005

Authorization - Replacement

Fiscal Note: 50826121 512100

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-6 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following certified personnel be appointed as substitutes on a temporary basis as needed:

Kathryn Moran Elementary

Kara Geoghegan Elementary

Melissa Dettore Elementary

Sallie Rodrigues Special Education, Elementary/Middle

John McKenna General Subject (K-12)

Michael Walsh Physical Education

Christopher Johnson General Subject

Elizabeth O'Brien Elementary (PK-2)/Special Education

**Luis Mejia Middle/Secondary Spanish/Computer
Technology**

Kimberly Beth Bose Elementary

Stephanie Maymon General Subject (K-12)

**Denise A. Kelly Elementary/Middle School Special
Education**

Catherine M. Perreault General Subject (K-12)

Erin Murray General Subject (K-12)

Denise Manzi Elementary

Heather Sawyer General Subject (K-12)

Scott Blais Special Education, Middle\Elementary

Elise Landry Elementary, 1-6

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**Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously
carried that this Resolution be adopted.**

NO. 05-2-7 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the

Superintendent, the reappointment of the following coaches, be accepted:

CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOL EAST

Carl Bishop Head Boys' Track

Robert Bouchard Assistant Boys' Track

Michael Cantone Head Boys' Baseball

Howard Chun Head Girls' Lacrosse

Michael Crudale Assistant Girls' Track

James Dionizio Assistant Boys' Baseball

Robert LaBanca Head Girls' Track

Andrew Marcaccio Freshman Boys' Baseball

Michael Rachiele Head Girls' Softball

CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOL WEST

Claire Baggesen Head Boys' Volleyball

Corey Capirchio Head Girls' Softball

Gina DelPozzo Assistant Girls' Track

Charles Jones Head Boys' Baseball

Sheila Lagasse Head Girls' Track

Ronald LaRocca Assistant Boys' Baseball

James Lucas Assistant Boys' Tennis

Robert Malo Freshman Boys' Baseball

Steven Matzner Head Boys' Tennis

Jeffrey Ruschetta Head Golf

Christopher Sullivan Assistant Golf

Moved by Mr. Traficante, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-8 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following certified staff members be granted a leave of absence without compensation as provided in Article XIX, Section B of the Master Agreement between the Cranston School Committee and the Cranston Teachers' Alliance:

MaryEllen Russell, Teacher

Elementary

Effective Dates: September 2005 – September 2006

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Deborah Pierini, Teacher

Elementary

Effective Dates: September 2005 - September 2006

Ina Land, Teacher

Elementary

Effective Dates: September 2006 - September 2007

Moved by Mr. Lupino and seconded by Mr. Traficante that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Palumbo noted the removal of Jessica Joly Palumbo from the agenda as stated in the Addendum to the Agenda.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

NO. 05-2-9 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement of the following certified personnel be accepted:

Maureen Cicchitelli, Principal

Oak Lawn School

Effective Date: June 30, 2005

Janet S. Barrow, World Language Teacher

Cranston High School East

Effective Date: June 30, 2005

Susan Ryan, Mathematics Teacher

Cranston High School East

Effective Date: January 28, 2005

Susan Lovejoy, Elementary Teacher

Peters School

Effective Date: June 30, 2005

Ronald J. Beagan, Guidance

Cranston High School West

Effective Date: June 30, 2005

Joyce Muir-Pastore, School to Work Coordinator

Cranston Area Career & Technical Center

Effective Date: June 30, 2005

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Moved by Mr. Lupino and seconded by Mr. Traficante that this Resolution be adopted.

Mrs. Ciarlo stated that many fine educators were retiring in this Resolution. Maureen Cicchitelli is the Principal of Oak Lawn School, and it is hard to believe that the time has come for her to retire. She still considers her the kid who came up from South County. She has an excellent background both in special needs and gifted education. She dug in and worked hard at Dutemple School. She and the PTO group at that school worked hard to develop the first computer lab at that school. Maureen has approximately thirty years experience in education. There are some principals in schools who are managers, and there are some principals who are educators. Maureen is truly

what the district looks for in an educator. She told Maureen that it wouldn't be easy to replace her, but Mrs. Ciarlo understood that she needed time to spend with her husband and her family. She wished her well and thanked Maureen for all her contributions. Susan Ryan is retiring after thirty-two years of dedicated service. She taught mathematics at Bain, Park View, and most recently at Cranston High School East. Susan Lovejoy is retiring after thirty-two years in Cranston and most recently as a beloved Kindergarten teacher at Peters School. She has taught at Norwood Avenue and Stone Hill as well. Ronald Beagan is retiring after thirty-three years of experience. She remembers when Ron was an English teacher and then went into guidance. Most recently he has been a guidance counselor at Cranston West. Joyce Muir-Pastore is retiring after thirty-one years in Cranston. Mrs. Ciarlo remembers Joyce as a classroom teacher in elementary school, as a middle school mathematics teachers and most recently she has been a school to career coordinator at the Career and Technical Center. In each of these responsibilities, Joyce has conducted herself in an outstanding way. Mrs. Ciarlo is proud of all these individuals; she is sorry to see them leave and wishes them the very best in the future.

Mr. Lupino remarked that he had the opportunity to know only three of these individuals. He met Joyce Muir-Pastore at the Career and Technical Center. She has done a wonderful job for the district and does a wonderful job coordinating their awards night. She will be missed, and she is very popular with the students. He indicated to

Maureen Cicchitelli that the school department hates to lose her. She has done a wonderful job at the school. The people under her really love and respect her. It will be difficult to replace her. He wished her well in her retirement. Susan Lovejoy has been a lifelong friend of Mr. Lupino's. They both attended Stone Hill School the year it opened. She is very young at heart and has been a wonderful role model for her students. His son had the good fortune to have her as a Kindergarten teacher. She will be sorely missed. He wished all the retirees good luck.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

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NO. 05-2-10 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation of the following certified personnel be accepted:

Linda M. Griffin, Teacher

Elementary

Effective Date: January 24, 2005

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-11 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation of the following certified personnel be accepted:

Employee A (medical reasons)

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-12 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation of the following coaches be accepted:

**Vincent Varrecchione, Head Coach Coed Golf
Cranston High School East
Effective Date: January 18, 2005**

**Ryan J. Kavanagh, Head Coach Indoor and Outdoor Track
Cranston High School West
Effective Date: March 1, 2005**

**Richard Harris, Head Coach Boys' Volleyball
Cranston High School East
Effective Date: January 21, 2005**

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously

carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-13 - Whereas, there may be more qualified individuals who will apply for current positions, and

Whereas, certain positions became available after the teacher selection of July 21, 2004 and more senior teachers may elect to occupy these positions under Article XVI of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and

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Whereas, funding for certain positions is not assured for the 2005-2006 school year, and as a result, more senior teachers could elect to take a current position, and

Whereas, positions occupied by retirees must be posted each year, and

Whereas, there may be changes in student distribution, and as a result, more senior teachers may take a current position, and

Whereas, positions must now be made available for more senior teachers who are scheduled to return from leave, and

Whereas, because of these concerns, and in accordance with Title 16 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, the Superintendent has recommended that the employment of certain teachers be terminated at the end of the 2004-2005 school year, and

Whereas, the Superintendent has sent prior notice to said teachers informing them of the specific reasons for their termination, and

Whereas, the Committee has provided said teachers with the opportunity to be heard in Executive Session regarding their termination,

Be it RESOLVED that said teachers be terminated at the close of the school year under provisions of Title 16 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, and

Be it further RESOLVED that the Superintendent notify those teachers of the Committee's action to terminate their employment.

Moved by Mr. Lupino and seconded by Mr. Traficante that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Palumbo noted that the date of July 19, 2004 should read July 21, 2004.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

NO. 05-2-14 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified employees be recalled from layoff:

**Anna DiSano, Teacher Assistant, Three Hours
Edgewood Highlands School
Effective Date: February 14, 2005**

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**Maryann Mattiello Teacher Assistant, Three Hours
Glen Hills School
Effective Date: February 14, 2005**

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-15 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified employees be appointed:

**Bernadetta Petrone, Facilitator
Alternate Education
Effective Date of Employment: January 18, 2005
Fiscal Note: 54262151 515100**

Marie Sanda, Math Science Center Associate

Curriculum

Effective Date of Employment: February 14, 2005

Fiscal Note: 57196147 511147

Alice G. DePina, Teacher Assistant

Cranston High School East

Effective Date of Employment: February 7, 2005

Fiscal Note: 11332032 519500

M. Carolle Pierre Philippe, Bus Monitor

Transportation

Effective Date of Employment: January 18, 2005

Fiscal Note: 14347518 518600

Dana Butler, Bus Aide

Transportation

Effective Date of Employment: February 14, 2005

Fiscal Note: 14347542 519500

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-16 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified staff members be granted

a leave of absence without compensation as provided in Article X of the Agreement between the Cranston School Committee and the Cranston Teachers' Alliance on behalf of Teachers Assistant/Bus Aide Unit:

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**Betty Tranghese, Special Education Teacher Assistant
Garden City School**

Effective Dates: March 1, 2005 - May 2, 2005

**Maureen Waldeck, Teacher Assistant
Waterman School**

Effective Dates: February 15, 2005 – September 2005

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-17 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified personnel be appointed as substitutes on a temporary basis as needed:

SECRETARIES

Diane Vaughn

Debra Ciampanelli

TEACHER ASSISTANT

Stacey Wildenhain

BUS DRIVER

Joseph Belony

CUSTODIANS

Michael Burley

Anthony Spruill

Edward Loppi

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-18 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement of the following non-certified personnel be accepted:

Carol Waybright, Secretary

Effective Date: June 30, 2005

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-19 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignations of the following non-certified personnel be accepted:

**Diane Vaughn, Part-Time Library Secretary
Woodridge/Edgewood Highland Schools
Effective Date: January 11, 2005**

**Serena Simeone, Teacher Assistant
Western Hills Middle School
Effective Date: January 13, 2005**

**Patricia Errico, Teacher Assistant
Cranston High School East
Effective Date: January 11, 2005**

**Janice Ribb, Secretary
Alternate Education
Effective Date: January 31, 2005**

**Maureen Lipata, Three-hour Food Service Worker
Food Service
Effective Date: January 28, 2005**

Kathleen Maine, Three-hour Food Service Worker

Food Service

Effective Date: October 28, 2004

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

NO. 05-2-20 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the termination of Employee B be accepted.

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried to move Resolution No. 05-2-22 and Tabled Resolution No. 05-1-17 to this position on the agenda.

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POLICY AND PROGRAM

NO. 05-2-22 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following Conference/Field Trips of Long Duration be authorized:

Richard Abruzzini, teacher at the Cranston Area Career & Technical

Center, and approximately thirty students to travel to Los Angeles, California from April 26, 2005 to May 1, 2005 to participate in the DECA Competitions.

Mary Ann Casale, Principal of Horton Elementary School, Christine Cannon and Dolores Smith, both Literacy teachers at Cranston High School East and Joanne Kohm, Reading teacher at Horton Elementary School to attend the International Reading Association's 50th Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas to hear nationally and internationally acclaimed speakers and attend workshops on Literacy issues affecting diversified student populations in Grades Kindergarten through Grade 12. Mary Ann Casale's conference time is May 2, 2005 to May 5, 2005; other teachers' conference time is May 1, 2005 to May 5, 2005.

Phyllis Parente, Literacy teacher at Oak Lawn School, to travel to Orlando, Florida to attend a Heinemann Workshop on Teaching for Comprehension and Fluency: Thinking, Talking and Writing About Reading, March 28, 2005 to March 30, 2005.

Richard Lepore, Cranston High School East music teacher, to travel to Baltimore, Maryland to escort a student to the Music Educators All Eastern National Convention, March 3, 2005 to March 6, 2005.

First Sergeant Joseph Fratiello, JROTC Instructor, and approximately fourteen students to travel to Washington, DC March 17, 2005 to

March 20, 2005 to compete and participate in the US Army Cadet Command National Drill Competition.

Victoria Lacroix, social worker at Cranston High School East, to travel to Atlanta, Georgia February 27, 2005 to March 2, 2005 to attend the Delta National Training: Taking the Next Step in Prevention Work Conference.

Moved by Mr. Lupino and seconded by Ms. Iannazzi that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Lupino referred to the DECA competitions trip of long duration and warned the parents and participants to be apprised of whatever insurance is available for them as far as trip insurance in the event the trip gets cancelled.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

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TABLED RESOLUTION

NO. 05-1-17 - Whereas, the Cranston School Committee is the Lessee under a certain lease dated August 8, 2002, by and between the Committee and UBIO, Inc., a Rhode Island Corporation and the owner

of property (hereinafter referred to as the “property”) located at 4 Sharpe Drive, Cranston, Rhode Island, and

Whereas, under Section 1.04 of said lease, after the first two years and within the first five-year term of said lease, the Committee has the option to purchase said property for the sum of Three Million, Two Hundred Thousand (\$3,200,000.00) Dollars, and

Whereas, also under Section 1.04 of said lease, after the first five years and during the five-year renewal period of said lease, the Committee has a right of first refusal to purchase said property, and

Whereas, the Committee and the Laborers International Union of North America are partners to an agreement to operate a Public Charter School on the premises of the property, and

Whereas, the Committee and UBIO, Inc. are the parties desirous of transferring and assigning said option to purchase and right of first refusal contained in said lease from the Committee to the New England Laborers Training Trust Fund,

Be it RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to execute the Lease Assignment, a copy of which is hereby attached and incorporated by reference.

There was no motion to remove this Resolution from the Table. This

Resolution dies.

BUSINESS

NO. 05-2-21 - RESOLVED, that the 2005-2006 Operating Budget, as recommended by the Superintendent, be approved.

Moved by Mr. Lupino and seconded by Mr. Traficante that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Lupino stated that the committee would be making some adjustments to this budget with regard to the Governor's portion and the health care. He asked Mrs. Ciarlo that this budget as presented to the School Committee if they are to accept it does this adequately address the needs of the Cranston Public Schools. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that it barely addresses the needs. Mr. Lupino said that the committee and the school department went through a Caruolo Act that addressed adequate funding for schools. He personally feels that adequate is not enough. He still believes that what was done before that judge was the proper thing to do. He wanted to be assured that if he voted

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in favor of this budget that it will give the students in Cranston the best public education possible with the dollars they are given, and Mrs. Ciarlo responded yes. He asked if it holds true that if the school

department is not funded the amount the committee agrees upon, would it mean that there would be less than adequate education for the students of Cranston, and Mrs. Ciarlo responded yes.

Mr. Traficante stated that the committee should make it clear that even though the bottom line budget figure is approximately \$10.6 million, with the report that Mr. Balducci gave to the committee last week that indicated a savings of approximately of \$677,000 in the health care account and approximately \$900,000 that the Governor is proposing for state aid, the committee is actually asking for \$9 million in city dollars for the current budget. He asked the committee to keep in mind that hopefully their expectations come to fruition regarding negotiations as well. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Balducci what the percentage of the increase was when the Governor's proposed state aid and health care were considered. Mr. Balducci responded that originally this budget was an increase of 9.54% looking at total bottom line from this year to next year. As was mentioned earlier, there is an adjustment to be made to health care for approximately \$677,000 and \$900,000 from one revenue source to the other. It reduces the bottom line to 9.02% increase from this year to next year.

Ms. Iannazzi asked if an amendment had been made on page 60 if it should be done at this juncture. Mr. Balducci responded that this was an amendment that should be voted on at this meeting.

Ms. Iannazzi moved to amend the budget on page 60. On the second to the last line item, the appropriation should be \$124,931.

Mr. Traficante seconded the motion.

Mr. Balducci explained that unfortunately the original amount budgeted in that account was approximately \$30,000. Ms. Iannazzi brought it to his attention at the last meeting. Another \$94,000 has to be added to that account so that there will be sufficient dollars to cover all the teacher assistants in that location or salary account.

Mr. Archetto stated that the committee worked very hard on this budget, and they received expert answers to their questions from the employees. However, because of the fiscal constraints that the city is in, Mr. Archetto had problems with this budget regarding the non-certified employees' pay raises for next year. He didn't understand the logic for it. In addition, he couldn't agree with the administrative pay increases. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Archetto if he were referring to the new raises or the substitute rates. Mr. Archetto responded that there were many of them for the non-certified employees. Mr. Votto explained that administration did an analysis of the non-certified substitute rates and the difficulty the school department has in getting substitutes. By

doing this, hopefully the district will attract more people. He compared Cranston to North Providence, Warwick, and West Warwick, and Cranston was the lowest paying. If a custodian who is out ill is not replaced by a substitute then overtime has to be paid to another custodian in order to cover a building at night.

Mr. Lupino noted that as a point of order, the amendment on the floor must be voted on.

Ms. Iannazzi, stated that the correct appropriation should be \$124,931 on page 60, the second to the last line item. The amount listed incorrectly was approximately \$30,000.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Archetto clarified his previous statement that it pertains to salary increases for bus drivers, substitute custodians, bus monitors, and secretaries. He stated that he has a problem supporting this portion of the budget.

Mr. Stycos stated that with regard to this same issue, Mr. Votto had mentioned that by increasing the substitute rates, the school department would get substitutes and, therefore, would not have to hire people at overtime rates. He asked for an estimate of how much overtime would be reduced and if the budget reflected that amount. In response, Mr. Votto said that there is overtime in the budget. The

school department isn't attractive in non-certified substitute rates. For example, the district has four substitute secretaries, and at the rate of \$7.75, administration would like to increase it to \$9.00 per hour. The schools have to be staffed when people are out. There are plenty of teacher substitutes but lack the non-certified substitute group. If there is no secretary to cover an elementary, there is no one to help the students in the school. It would have a budgetary impact as well as on customer service in terms of providing service to the staff, students, and parents. It does have impact across the board. If there are no substitutes for bus runs, Mr. Zisseron has to double up the runs which means picking up additional stops. The ride is longer and the buses are crowded. The district is simply trying to be competitive in the market place.

Mr. Stycos stated that he understood the customer service argument, but there is no figuring in the budget that overtime would be cut because of these higher substitute rates. Mr. Votto added that he didn't believe there was a particular figure in the budget, but the district will pay overtime in certain cases to pay for these particular substitutes the district is lacking. As an example, if there were custodians out on the night shift at Western Hills, the day people would have to stay later and overtime would be a factor.

Mr. Stycos stated that he and Mr. Balducci had a telephone conversation last week because he had missed the budget meeting regarding some costs that he felt were over-estimated. Mr. Stycos

referred to page 125, line 9, which is a large deduction. In that line, each retiree was figured to cost \$13,000, and in the past the committee used

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that figure as a savings for each retiree. The committee used the figure of \$20,000 as a savings because the person went out at a higher step and the new person comes in at a lower step. At one meeting, Mr. Eramian thought this amount was too high because when they retire they have health insurance. A reconfiguration was done of what the savings would be, and the savings were dropped from \$20,000 to \$13,000 per retiree. In this retirement column, the district is saving \$13,000 per retiree yet in the health insurance account administration is budgeting for thirty additional insurance plans for those thirty retirees. He felt that the health insurance cost was double counted for these new retirees. The way to correct it is to add to line 9 page 125 the \$6,907 per retiree which is essentially taking the health insurance cost out of that line item because it has been budgeted in another line item. That amounts to at least \$200,000. Mr. Balducci explained that when he budgets those thirty retirees and those thirty are going to be replaced with lower step teachers, health care should be a wash. Those retirees will continue to have health coverage after they retire, and new staff will come on board asking for health coverage. Because contract language allows spouses to purchase coverage through the school department, the

committee has to be concerned about those additional contracts coming on board above and beyond the teacher retirement. He and Mr. Votto looked at prior numbers of spouses coming on board from retired staff persons, and the average is 1/3 asking for spouses to come on board. He budgeted thirty additional contracts as part of the health obligation next year, and after looking at two years worth of data, it could be reduced to possibly ten to fifteen. He always takes the conservative approach but there is room for adjustment. He would not suggest cutting the entire thirty, but there is some movement down. Mr. Stycos stated that he was inclined to leave that thirty alone but turn the \$13,000 savings into a \$20,000 savings because taking the health insurance out of that factor, he would be turning it into a wage savings. That number would be increased by \$207,000. Mr. Balducci explained the exercise the former School Committee had him go through. It was later on in the spring, and administration and the School Committee were deliberating on final numbers prior to June 30th. Mr. Balducci suggested that it was too early in the process right now to change \$13,000 up to \$20,000. His recommendation would be to not adjust it at this point. The committee will be deliberating again on this budget sometime before June 30th. At that point, the school department will have a better handle on the retired teachers being replaced as to what salaries the new people are coming in at, etc. Mr. Stycos stated that he didn't think the \$13,000 was a good number. Mr. Balducci responded that he couldn't defend \$20,000 at this point. Mr. Stycos stated that it would be re-using the numbers that were made to determine the

\$13,000. Mr. Balducci responded that it was based on late spring when he had one person replacing another. He is not at this position at this time.

Mr. Stycos referred to a \$30,000 adjustment. When Mr. Balducci's figures out what the payroll will be for next year, there is the existing staff and the salary accounts for each school. They are bumped up a step and the raise added. That is done with the existing staff, and in another part of the budget, ten elementary positions are eliminated because

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of consolidation of elementary classrooms because the elementary population is declining. When the elementary positions are subtracted, they are subtracted out at step one rather than step two because they have been turned into step two through this computer process. They should be subtracted out at the same rate that they have been added in, and they have been added in through this computer program at step two. The difference in the steps is approximately \$30,000. Mrs. Ciarlo commented that one of administration's concerns is that the school department pays for its own health care, and there is no reserve. If Blue Cross makes a mistake and projects 11% and it becomes 12% or 13%, there is no reserve account to fall back on. The city has approximately \$2 million in reserves just in case the forecast is wrong. If the school

department exceeds the forecast, Mr. Balducci has to find the money somewhere else in the budget. She further commented that she remembered Mr. Neri taking the names of people with the steps, and that is how he arrived at the \$13,000. When Mr. Balducci has more definitive information, the district would be better off making the change at that time. The district can't bounce a check to Blue Cross. Administration can't forecast whether or not it will be a healthy year. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Balducci if he would recommend making any changes at this time. Mr. Balducci responded that with regard to Mr. Stycos's earlier comments about tweaking the \$20,000 to \$13,000, he would not do it. With regard to Mr. Stycos's suggestion for taking the ten teaching positions, he did have a conversation with Mr. Votto; and Mr. Stycos is correct. For those ten teaching positions, he would have to factor in the savings on step two teachers so he would take into consideration the step increases. He has not been able to work out that total, so he will verify the \$30,000 if it is correct. Mrs. Ciarlo added that no one knows what the negotiated contracts will be. The \$30,000 might evaporate quickly. Mr. Balducci added that as the budget stands right now he will calculate the additional savings based on the projected step increase. Mrs. Ciarlo noted that administration has been so conservative in the number of new staff being requested, they haven't given themselves much wiggle room if that changes. They are estimating now that they can generate ten positions, but that is not absolutely a sure thing. She doesn't know where the new enrollment will end up, and she has to provide for it. She would rather be conservative and make adjustments later on. Mr.

Stycos agreed that Mrs. Ciarlo couldn't predict the future, but when the budget is presented, it has to be based on certain assumptions, and they have to make sure those assumptions hold up. If they don't hold up, the credibility of the budget is at stake. In the step one/step two issue, Mr. Balducci should make this change because just as Ms. Iannazzi found an error that was on the plus side, there may be errors on the other side, and the budget should be made as good as possible. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that she was not disagreeing with Mr. Stycos, but she doesn't know where some of these changes are going to be; they are just estimating at this point in time. She doesn't want it perceived that the budget is not accurate, but there is no way on February 14th that they can be so accurate with so many unknowns happening later on in the year. Mr. Stycos indicated to Mr. Balducci that when he goes back to the \$30,000, he will come out a few dollars short because in that \$30,000 figure there is another number which is that he is figuring that someone will

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get laid off on step one and hire the other person at step three. Mr. Balducci indicated that he estimated the savings to be approximately \$27,300. Mr. Stycos noted that this amount should be subtracted from page 125, line 9.

Mr. Stycos moved to subtract \$27,300 from page 125, line 9.

Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion.

This Amendment was adopted with Mr. Lupino opposed.

Mr. Stycos stated that he wished to comment on some things that disappoint him in this proposed budget. He echoed Mr. Archetto's comment on administrative raises. There was a lot of discussion during the public comment period why those raises were important. He stated that he found the amount of these raises offensive because at some point in a person's salary history people have to say enough is enough. The committee is talking about really large raises for people. These raises of \$8,000, \$5,000 and \$6,000 each exceed the 3%. He knows there is a lot of discussion over what has happened in the past that this is just 3% plus a step, but he sees it a little differently. There was a step system for administrators, and then a couple of the administrators hit top step. When that happened, they added a new step system because they would simply get the pay raise. That was done over his objections. It use to be that one could pick up the budget, look at a line item, and be able to determine what a person's salary was with the proposed raise with the step and percent and what their new salary would be. Then a change was made and an account that was never in the budget before was established. That account is on the bottom of page 124 which states administrative performance \$34,000. The taxpayer doesn't know what that is. The committee happens to know because they received a breakdown of it, but that is where the money for those raises is. The

pension costs are going up, and the committee has a responsibility for it because when people get into top administrative positions they tend to get big raises for three years and then retire for high pay.

Mr. Stycos further remarked that his second disappointment is that there is a serious situation at Cranston High School East in guidance.

The SALT Report several years ago indicated that the school needed an additional guidance counselor. This was mentioned the last time that NEASC visited Cranston East, and it needs to be addressed.

Mr. Stycos further commented that the high school population is going up, and the district has not responded to guidance. It is making it very difficult now for the guidance counselors. Since 1999 the elementary population has declined approximately 500 students, and the high school population has gone up approximately 600 students and high school guidance has not been re-configured.

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Mr. Stycos moved to amend this Resolution as follows:

To take ½ a guidance position out of the elementary guidance program and also eliminate in the asset protection account the paving of the playgrounds at Stadium School and Stone Hill School, which is a \$53,800 item on page 92 line 6 and to use that money to

create an additional full-time guidance position at Cranston East.

Mr. Archetto seconded the motion.

Mr. Lupino stated that Ms. Iannazzi reminded him of something that was sent recently to the committee. The ratio of students that are being serviced at Cranston East is approximately 277 students per counselor. At Cranston West, it is 293 students per guidance counselor. Mr. Lupino wondered why Mr. Stycos would make an amendment that would even further skew that number in the scenario of East versus West. He asked Mr. Stycos if he was suggesting that the committee equalize the ratios which might mean further reducing a counselor at East or adding additional staff at West. Mr. Stycos responded that he knows there is a problem at Cranston East from those reports. If Mr. Lupino wished to make an amendment to also add a guidance counselor at Cranston West, he suggested that Mr. Lupino do that. Mrs. Ciarlo commented that if the School Committee felt that administration look at the high school guidance counselors then they will do that. One of the things that administration is trying to do is to revise and upgrade guidance services at the high school level. They are looking into a different type of model for the high schools. If it appears that there is something unequal or that the needs of the students are not being met, the administration will come back with a recommendation to the committee. The reason for the discrepancy as it stands right now between Cranston East and Cranston West is due to the fact that when they went from a

three-year to a four-year high school, the high schools were asked what they needed when they became a four-year high school. Cranston West said that they needed a guidance counselor and Cranston East said that they needed an assistant principal. Administration knows that the population is changing at Cranston West and Cranston East, but she wants to look at the quality of the services that are being provided; it is not the caseload but what is being done with the caseload that makes the difference. She, along with administration, have some concerns so by the end of the year when everyone knows more about the budget and what will take place with retirements, they will be coming back with a recommendation based upon implementation of a revised guidance program. She didn't think it would be appropriate at this time to add or subtract any guidance counselors, and especially at the elementary level where guidance counselors are needed.

Ms. Iannazzi asked Mrs. Ciarlo to also consider the middle schools when administration considers the revitalization of the guidance program. Western Hills' caseload is one guidance counselor for 380 students.

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Mrs. Ciarlo added that when middle schools throughout the country first opened they did not have a large guidance office. They had

basically one guidance counselor and use the advisor advisee concept. In Cranston, administration tried to maintain three guidance counselors and one department chair in many of the schools. It would be helpful for the committee if at one of the committee work sessions Mrs. Jean Greco, supervisor of guidance, explain what the new program is that has been adopted by the state so that the committee would have a better understanding.

Mrs. Ciarlo referred to one of the comments that Mr. Stycos made earlier. One of the comments he made was that top administrators get high salaries and then retire after three years. She stated that the people who work for her are an exception to that. After working thirty years or forty-five years is not running out of here. The committee needed to know why this line item was created. It was not automatic that central office staff would get raises or steps. They are under performance contracts, and they are evaluated on an annual basis. There have been years when people have not received their raise or step because their performance has not warranted it. Those people are not on board now. While the conversation was going on about this subject, she added up the number of positions the district would have to have in the event the current administrators retired. There would be an additional four or five positions added to these people who Mr. Stycos thinks are so highly paid. There would be another Carol Bissanti, another Mary Carter, someone else in personnel, and another assistant superintendent. Don't assume because the money is in that account that it will all go to the executive staff or that any of

it will go to the executive staff. They have performance contracts and will get whatever raise everyone else is getting, or if they are going through the steps, if their performance warrants it, they will get a step as well. They are not different than anyone else.

Mr. Palumbo stated that he has heard this many times over since he has been on the School Committee. It is blatantly unfair; it is almost twisted. He worked in Cranston for a few years and then in Providence for the remainder of the time. There are a number of teachers in his family. He has a brother who worked in East Providence and another one in Warwick. They often talk about what is happening and who is good and who is not good. When he heard the number of administrators they have in their cities, he was absolutely dumfounded when he became a member of this committee and found out how few people there are on the high administrative level in Cranston. If a teacher starts coaching a sport such as basketball or football, if they are an advisor for the newspaper, or take on any added duties, they are paid for it. No one says that it is not fair for Mr. Scaffardi or Mr. Laliberte to take on the work of people who left. They have stayed long hours at night, and he has seen them in their offices at 9:30 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. It is an absolute disgrace that the committee would sit here and say that they are making too much money. He reminded everyone of what is happening in the schools; it does not happen accidentally. These people work hard and take on additional work all the time, and they don't make what they make in other cities. The district is drawing

from the same pool, and it is only loyalty that keeps them here and their love of this school system. They should not be abused for this, and he hoped that this talk about them making too much money will be thought through a little more thoroughly. It is grossly unfair to say that.

Mr. Lupino stated that he was not at this meeting to defend administrators, but if Mr. Stycos was suggesting that the committee had the power to freeze administrative salaries, he would be the first one in line to support that if the committee also had the power to freeze their health insurance costs, cost of gasoline they buy, and their city taxes. No one can expect a person to say at a job and go backwards.

Mr. Lupino referred to Mr. Stycos's amendment and said that in the process of developing the budget, the principals and different area people made certain recommendations and asked if Mr. Frederick made a recommendation that he was looking for an additional guidance counselor, and Mr. Scherza indicated that he was. Mr. Lemoi was requesting teaching staff.

Mrs. Greifer said that she had done some work on the problem of guidance counselors and she did look into the difference between

East and West. Ten years ago the ratio at Cranston East was one guidance counselor for every 195 students. It is now one to every 275 students. The population at East needs far greater amounts of guidance service than Cranston West does. They have a transient population of approximately 150 students that fluctuates each year. There is a language problem with many of these students, especially with their parents; and guidance takes these students through the application process because their parents can be of no assistance. Many of these students coming into East come from foreign countries, and guidance has to deal with foreign governments to obtain their records. Even though the guidance counselor ratio is a little higher at Cranston West, there is a more intensive need for guidance services at Cranston East. She would like to see in the budget another guidance counselor for East but she would like to see how the budget shakes out a little better before proposing it.

Mr. Palumbo added that it is not that the committee disagrees in having more guidance counselors, but the committee has heard what is needed in the schools. There is no sheet music for the bands, but one member wants to put in a guidance counselor. If the guidance counselors are added to the ratio that someone came up with, the committee would be adding at Cranston East, Cranston West, Western Hills and possibly other schools. The committee would then have to put up with the Mayor going into orbit. There is only so much the committee can do. He agreed with Mrs. Greifer that with the problems the students have at East, there is a greater need there.

However, he asked where the money comes from. The committee can't cut taking care of the school buildings.

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Mr. Traficante stated that the committee should follow the suggestion of the Superintendent to have Mrs. Greco explain the guidance situation throughout the district at the next work session.

Moved by Mr. Traficante, seconded by Mr. Lupino and unanimously carried to move the question.

Mr. Stycos's amendment failed with Mr. Archetto and Mr. Stycos in favor; Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Palumbo and Mr. Traficante were opposed.

Mr. Stycos referred to page 91 line 6 and indicated that this \$4,500 pays for a parking lot on Norwood Avenue that in the past was the teachers' parking lot for the Norwood Avenue School. Now that it is an Adult Education Center, he proposed to get out of the lease and save the \$4,500. This lot is in his ward; there is parking on the street in that area which is a partially office building area. The district could save this money and park on the street. There is also parking behind the building now that the rear of the building is not used for students playing at recess.

Mr. Stycos moved to amend this resolution as follows:

To zero out line 6 on page 91, the plant facility acquisition purchase services that Norwood used and take the \$4,500 and add into the music accounts on page 109 add \$2,500 to the equipment repair account and add \$2,000 to the sheet music, music supplies account.

Mr. Archetto seconded the motion.

Mrs. Ciarlo stated that the parking lot Mr. Stycos referred to is used for not only Adult Education but also for the Alternative Education Program. It is a misnomer to think of that as just Adult Education. There are a number of students who come to that school from both Cranston East and Cranston West. The Director of Adult Education is trying to make the program a pay as you go to become self-sufficient.

She could be given the challenge of coming up with as much of the cost of the parking lot and charge it to that account. She would not recommend that the rental of the lot be cancelled. It is very dangerous parking on Norwood Avenue. She doesn't want any of the high school students parking on that street and trying to get out of their cars. Mr. Lupino asked the duration of the lease, and Mr. Balducci responded that it was a one-year lease. Mr. Lupino commented that the students could park in the street, yet there was a snowstorm and a parking ban was put into force. During the time, school wasn't cancelled. This is a minimal amount of money, and Mr.

Lupino was not in disagreement with where Mr. Stycos would like to put the money; but it seems there is a facility with a reasonable amount of money for renting the space there. He would hate to see the district give it up and then the person renting it to the district would double or triple the

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rent if the district found they needed it in the future for the building. Mrs. Ciarlo added that the back of the school is not very large, and in some of the programs, the students will be doing calisthenics and outside activities. She wouldn't want them doing these activities between automobiles. Mr. Lupino asked if the district was to use the school grounds for parking would the Interlocal Trust have a say in that. Mr. Balducci said he would have to bring it to their attention.

Mr. Stycos's amendment failed with Mr. Archetto and Mr. Stycos in favor; Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Palumbo, and Mr. Traficante were opposed.

Mr. Traficante asked if administration had received an answer from their health care carrier regarding those spouses who purchase insurance upon retirement if they go over the \$6,000 limit. Mr. Balducci responded that he had not heard from them, but he had contacted them.

Mr. Lupino referred to page 85 of the proposed budget, the total appropriation for Hope Highlands School.

Mr. Lupino moved to amend this Resolution as follows:

He wished to add \$17,300 to the total appropriation for account 34 which is Hope Highlands School. This would replace the teacher aide that was cut from the school.

Mr. Lupino stated that there was a request from some of the parents to add a teacher position at the school. He thought about it and talked with some of the other committee members concerning it. The numbers did not justify it although he would like to see a lower class size than there is currently, however, that is not his call. He has heard that the school is overcrowded, but it is not; it is at cap. They were still able to attain some very impressive numbers at the school. Because of the influx of students all the time at this school, those classes will always be at the maximum. He knows there are currently twenty-five students in each of the Grade 2 classes and yet there are approximately eight students clustered out of that school to other schools. Even with the eight added back in, it would not justify an additional teacher.

Mr. Traficante second the motion.

Mrs. Ciarlo commented that the district is down by almost one-half

the number of literacy paras that they had. To establish a precedent by putting a para at Hope Highlands School would be guaranteeing them something when she is not guaranteeing something at any of the other schools. It depends on the needs at all of the schools. She suggested that Mr. Scherza look at some of the students in Grade 1 who would be clustered out to see whether or not it might be more appropriate to open up a classroom. She would rather open a room than put a teacher assistant in when she

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doesn't know what the numbers will be. If there are that many being clustered out, she would have to open a room, but she has to look at all the schools and not just one. This is the first year that Hope Highlands received any assistance relative to literacy. There were three aides, and she had to take one away. She supports the idea, but she would rather have the flexibility to determine what needs to be done to relieve the class size at Hope Highlands.

Mr. Archetto asked where the money would come from to take care of this line item, and Mr. Lupino asked that the money be added to this line item. The amount of the Governor's revenue would be reduced by that amount. He took the numbers of all the other second grades and took an average. Mr. Archetto stated to Mr. Lupino that he was basically counting on the \$900,000 from the Governor's distribution.

Mr. Traficante stated that he would like to amend the budget to include all fourteen or sixteen aides that the committee had to write off last year; he would like to include a bilingual guidance counselor at Cranston East; and he would like to include middle school sports. He asked the committee to keep in mind that they were asking for \$9 million of city funds, and they know it won't come from a tax increase.

It will come from either growth in the city of Cranston and state funding. This budget has to be affordable, and \$9 million may not seem too affordable to the taxpayers of Cranston. He felt the committee should go with what it has. Mrs. Ciarlo said that she promised the parents and the staff at Hope Highlands that she would look at this situation very closely because there are other alternatives such as classroom size reduction teachers, and teacher assistants. Administration needs to see how they can reduce class size so that this school can achieve even higher scores.

Mr. Palumbo stated that he felt very strongly about aides in classrooms. The committee has to wait to see what can be done a little later on. He felt that Mrs. Ciarlo was doing a good and fair job in doling out these aides to the schools. There are high numbers at this school, but by the same token, the numbers do not go beyond the contract clause even though it doesn't make for a good education as the committee would like it to be. He will do everything he can later on to fill that request. It is not the right time to do it now.

This amendment failed with Mr. Lupino in favor; Mr. Archetto, Mrs.

Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Palumbo, Mr. Stycos, and Mr. Traficante opposed.

Mr. Lupino commented the district is under contract for rubbish removal and asked if the Governor's proposal for a tipping increase would warrant the committee increasing the amounts in this area. If the Governor proposed an across the board increase, it would negate all municipal contracts with regard to this. He asked if the service company would have to increase their fees by that amount, and Mr. Balducci responded that they would. He has had conversations with the city, and they are confident that they will

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reach the 20% threshold. At this point, he is not recommending increasing the rubbish removal cost. Mr. Lupino asked Councilwoman Fogarty if the recycling was included to reach the 20% for rubbish. He asked if the yard waste was included into the recycling portion of the waste, and Mrs. Fogarty said that her gut reaction was to say it was not. He asked the City Council to look into this.

Mr. Balducci indicated to the committee that there should be an adjustment to the health area and to align the proposed budget to the Governor's revenue

Mr. Lupino moved to amend the proposed budget amount to reflect the decrease in the projected health insurance costs in the amount of \$677,000.

Mr. Balducci commented that originally he had projected a 15% increase on health care across the board. He received correspondence from the health carrier that Blue Cross's increase should be approximately an 11% increase. In addition, when the health budget was prepared, Mr. Balducci had only five months of data, and when he received the revised rates from Blue Cross, he was able to project all of January. He then used seven months of actual data plus the reduction in the rate for a revised cost of \$677,000 off of next year's request. Mr. Stycos commented that Mrs. Ciarlo had said that the committee should not fool around with the health insurance account. Mr. Balducci responded that whether it is done now or once this budget moves forward to the finance office, they will have that conversation in the spring. They should be pro-active and adjust that figure down because it will have to be done one way or another.

Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion.

This Amendment to the Resolution was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Lupino moved to amend this Resolution as follows:

To adjust the budget to increase the state aid by \$913,431 and

reducing the city's appropriation by the same amount.

Mr. Traficante seconded the motion.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Balducci for the final figure for the proposed budget, and Mr. Balducci responded that the committee would be voting on a proposed budget of \$121,272,706. The amount the school department would be requesting from the city for next year is \$83,582,068 which is a 13% increase. Before it was 15%, and it is now 13% of city dollars.

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This Resolution as amended twice was adopted with Mr. Archetto and Mr. Stycos opposed; Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Palumbo, and Mr. Traficante were in favor.

VI. SPEAKERS – Non-agenda Items

Michael Cardarelli, Jr., 53 Fairfield Road - Mr. Cardarelli stated that Ms. Iannazzi had made an excellent point regarding Resolution No. 05-2-4. She mentioned about the public relations issue in this

resolution. There has been so much to rave about this district, and the School Committee has fallen flat on its face with regard to public relations. The previous administrations on the city side had done a good job of boasting their accomplishments in regard to what the city had done, but the School Committee has done a terrible job. He told the committee that they have to turn this around. The administration team is very busy running a school system, and the School Committee is very busy fighting for what the district needs, but it has done a poor boasting about the accomplishments. Mr. Cardarelli referred to Mr. Stycos's comments regarding pay raises. He also referred to comments made by someone in the newspaper about Mr. Cardarelli's actions at a previous School Committee meeting. When comments are made about the administrative salaries, they border on class warfare. He made comments about these salaries being almost obscene. He didn't want to put words in Mr. Stycos's mouth, but that is what he was saying. They are too much or they were grossly high. He is talking about a \$34,000 account that is going to six people. That is their step increases. These are people who, because they have gone to new steps and new duties have been added to their positions, another person would have to be hired to take over duties which would cost another \$80,000. If Mr. Laliberte retires or burns out, two people would have to be hired to replace him. That \$34,000 account would be gone. Mr. Stycos's comments were based on the typical thing the committee and the public hears. It is this class warfare heard at the council meetings where taxpayer advocates get up to the microphone. Mr. Cardarelli said that he doesn't have a degree and he

is a letter carrier. If he doesn't like what Mr. Balducci makes, he should go to school, earn a degree, apply for the job, and then make the same salary as Mr. Balducci. However, he doesn't have the same responsibilities that the administrators have. He doesn't have to educate 11,000 children; he puts little mail envelopes in little boxes, and that is the end of his responsibility. He puts in eight hours and then goes home. To have the education of 11,000 children on his shoulders and to have the unfunded mandates for 11,000 children on his shoulders are the differences. He expects Mr. Laliberte to raise the math scores so every child in Cranston gets 99% of the standards. This is nothing but class warfare, and what is obscene is the fact that Mr. Stycos and Mr. Archetto will sit there and take the very courageous position to vote no against the budget, but all the two of them did tonight was to come up with \$34,000 they didn't like in raises. Mr. Archetto talked about the non-certified staff salaries that he had questions on, but didn't raise any questions. Mr. Stycos talked about a \$4,500

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account that he didn't like for Norwood Avenue School parking lot, and approximately \$30,000 for the two amounts that accompanied the step one step two issues. He asked what those add up to in a \$121 million budget. It adds up to nothing of a \$121 million budget. He told Mr. Archetto that he voted no on a \$121 million budget that educates 11,000 students because he was against .0001% of the

budget for 11,000 students. He told Mr. Archetto that he should be proud of himself; he told Mr. Stycos that he should be proud as well. It is not about the dollar amounts; it is about the politics. Mr. Cardarelli said that he is not a politician this year; he is a parent, and that is why he was attending this meeting. He waited until 10:20 p.m. to hold these people accountable. The others had the intestinal fortitude to vote in favor of the budget for the students. That is why he will be at the meetings month after month to hold the committee accountable.

With regard to the tabled resolution regarding the Charter School, Mr. Cardarelli indicated he was disappointed to see this resolution die. The Laborers most likely don't want to buy the building after all the attacks made against them. Anytime someone is willing to give the school department support, it should be accepted. There must be a good reason for the committee allowing the resolution to die.

Parent from Hope Highlands School – She thanked the committee for hearing the parents and trying to help them. She told Mr. Stycos that she appreciated him looking for little items in the budget; every dollar makes a difference.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that the meeting be adjourned.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was

adjourned at

10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony J. Lupino

Clerk